

Title: Food Delivery System

Purpose

Federal Regulations authorize a variety of food delivery systems. This chapter serves to describe the system used by the Montana WIC Program and the guidelines for managing that system. Montana WIC benefits are a standardized negotiable item with restricted use and a valid period.

Authority

7 CFR 246.12(b)

Policy

It is the policy of the Montana WIC Program that the retail system is used for the delivery of food benefits.

I. Authorized Vendors

- A. Only those food retailers/farmers authorized by the Montana WIC Program may redeem food benefits or otherwise provide supplemental foods to participants.
- B. A list of Montana's WIC-authorized retailers/farmers is available at all local agencies.

II. Participants

- A. Participants shall receive the WIC Program's supplemental foods free of charge.
- B. A participant must travel to the retailer/farmer to redeem their WIC benefits for the authorized food items.
- C. A participant may cash their standard WIC benefits with any WIC-authorized retailer in Montana.
- D. A participant may cash their WIC Fruit and Vegetable benefits with any WIC-authorized farmer or retailer.

III. State WIC Agency Responsibilities

- A. Provide a uniform WIC benefit which is similar in appearance to a check. This benefit is used by all local programs.
- B. Maintain an inventory of WIC benefits on hand and order replacement benefits as needed.
- C. Pay vendors in a timely manner. The vendor is reimbursed when he presents the WIC benefit to his bank for payment within 30 days from the last date to use. The WIC benefits are then presented through the Federal Reserve System to Solutran, Lake Lillian, MN, with whom the State WIC Agency contracts to perform services.
- D. Maintain a contingent revolving fund for the WIC Program at Solutran. Each day the bank presents the State Office with a statement showing the amount of benefits paid. The bank is reimbursed for this amount through the use of a telephone transfer system.
- E. Expire all outstanding issued benefits within 90 days of the first day to use.

IV. Local WIC Program Responsibilities

- A. Issue WIC benefits to eligible participants for authorized foods.
- B. Obtain participant/guardian signatures on signature pad.
- C. WIC benefits voided and/or returned are to be scanned into participant's record or filed.
- D. Keep WIC benefits locked in a secure place. Local programs are responsible for stolen or lost WIC benefits via the Local WIC Agency Agreement (see Policy 8-8). They are also responsible for reporting stolen WIC benefits to the State WIC Agency so the State WIC Office can handle stop payment procedures.
- E. Local WIC agencies are financially responsible for WIC benefits mishandled by local program staff.

V. WIC Benefit Design and Information

- A. The WIC benefit lists the prescribed foods by item description, size and quantity. The first and last days to use are listed on the WIC benefit. The benefit number, participant ID number and the participant name are also printed on the benefit.
- B. A space is provided for the vendor redeeming the WIC benefit to enter his/her assigned stamp. Space is provided for the signature of the participant. The signature is obtained when the participant purchases the prescribed food and after the clerk enters the purchase total in the "Amount of Sale" block. The signature is used by the retailer for verification of the signature on the ID page of the WIC Participant Program Booklet.
- C. WIC benefits contain numbers at the top and bottom of the WIC benefit (magnetic ink character recognition - MICR). These pre-printed numbers identify the Federal Reserve Bank, the local bank and the account number. After the WIC benefit is paid, the amount paid is added by the bank.